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THE  
ABIDING MIRACLES OF PROPHECY.

BY  
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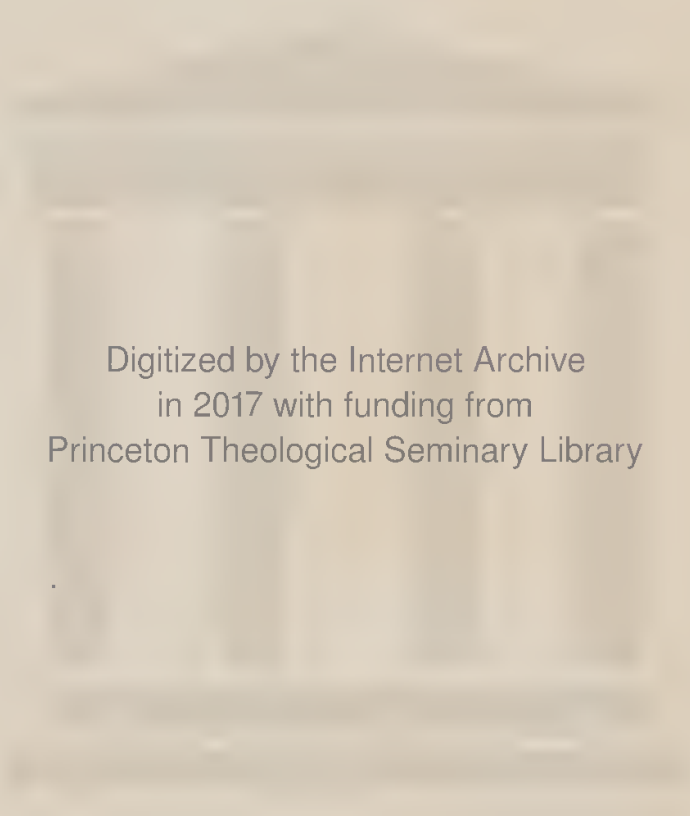
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## ABIDING MIRACLES OF PROPHECY.

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IF the Bible is a revelation from God,—we sometimes hear it said,—it ought to have a divine impress in every line of it that would carry conviction to every reader or hearer. But that which would carry conviction to one mind would not to another. There are among men a thousand different standards of excellence, and the very thing that delights one offends another. The Bible is a book for all ages and all nationalities and all ranks and conditions of men. It has been written by men, in the language of men, and very much of it is their own testimony as to what they have seen or heard; they were guided by the Spirit of God in such a sense as that they wrote what God would have them write in a language suited thereto; but their freedom was not violated, and the evidence of this is one of the features that most tend to inspire the reader with confidence. There is a great diversity of style in the Bible, corresponding to the nature of the subjects treated of; but in general, simplicity and directness characterize the style. It is a great fault when the style seems to be demanding admiration for itself; the best style is that which is not thought of, as the best glass is that which does not draw your attention to itself, but allows objects to be seen as though there were no glass at all intervening. The Bible is often sublime, but it is chiefly through the greatness of the thoughts expressed. The power of the word consists in the power of the truths which it expresses.

God has made man moral, mental, physical; and in addressing him through a revelation, he would naturally address not merely his senses or his literary taste, but the whole man. It is especially in his moral relations that God addresses him; and He does it in accordance with

the laws to which he has subjected this part of man's nature. We find that a willingness to receive instruction, to receive evidence, to admit one's errors, in other words a spirit of candour, is necessary in order that a man may obtain light. This thing is constantly verified. If a man doggedly insists that the Native doctors with their charms are much more trustworthy than a skilled European physician, it is not impossible that he may pay the penalty of this prejudice with the life of his child. Illustrations meet us at every step in life. Now if God is so careful in all other matters to lay men under responsibility to cultivate a spirit of candour in order that they may find out what is best, can we wonder that He should insist upon the same disposition in offering them a revelation of his will? It would be strange indeed if he did not do so. We may expect then not that the careless reader, or the prejudiced reader, or the self-sufficient reader will see the Bible to be God's word, but that the candid reader will. Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, said Christ to those who came to him asking the meaning of his words. They who really desire to know the will of God, and to do it, may expect to know it.

There is no amount of testimony that would not be lost on a cavilling spirit, such as the missionary often encounters among our educated or half-educated young men. No matter what evidence may be adduced, they can think of something else, and because this is not produced they deny the value of all the rest. The missionary has no power to constrain them to give due heed to any argument he presents; he cannot give them a will to know; they have come for the purpose of cavilling, and cavil they will. Our Lord himself had to encounter such men. They did not deny his mighty miracles, but asked for a sign from heaven; if this had been given them they could have called for something else; and when this line failed them, they could attribute all to demoniacal influence.

The prophecies of Scripture have been justly called moral miracles. If anybody is really desiring demonstration of the truth of the Bible, and is thoroughly will-

ing to receive evidence on the subject and to obey the Bible if proved true, he will find the demonstration he desires. It is a great mistake to suppose that a man must reconcile all things with the point to be proved. before he can assent to it; he may have evidence that establishes the point conclusively even while he is unable to reconcile a multitude of things connected with it. If a man whose word you cannot doubt assures you that he wrote and signed a certain document, you will believe it even though there may be statements in the paper which you cannot now reconcile with the character of the writer; you will simply wait for further intelligence on those points, without allowing your belief in your friend's assurance to be affected. In the 9th chapter of John we have the different view taken of the miracle there recorded, by the blind man who was the subject of it, and by the Pharisees; and we have here an illustration of what we are saying. The Pharisees could bring forward many difficulties which the poor man could not solve; but he held fast to what he knew; whereas he had been blind from birth, now he saw. So when Jesus finds him and says, *Believest thou on the Son of God?* he replies, *Who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him?* He felt that it was a safe thing to be guided by one who had given him sight, and had no doubt that he would in due time get light on all obscure points.

We propose bringing forward a few of the numerous prophecies of Scripture, to show that the supernatural is embodied in them and made as truly present to us in this day, as it was to those who saw the wonderful works of Christ.

## II.

Suppose there was extant some document that dated from A.D. 1000. There can be no question of its antiquity, for it was known at the time and has been referred to in each succeeding century by well-known writers, and quoted by them so largely that every sentence of it can be verified in this way. In this work we find a prediction running thus:

The Italie lion Good-party shall enter France as a lamb, and build of blood and bones a tower the like of which was never seen; but it shall be overthrown by a mine dug with English spades and powder and Prussian pickaxes and fire at Waterloo; the son of Glaucus receives the trustful lion and convcys him to the daughter of Constantine, who counted six and buried him between Africa and America; many buried thrones shall re-emerge in the earthquake.

This of course would be unintelligible during the centuries intervening between the date of writing and this present century, when men would find in it a remarkable prediction of Napoleon Bonaparte, a Corsican by birth, Italian by descent, entering France as an unknown individual, rising to an unapproached preëminence, overthrown at Waterloo by English and Prussian arms, conveyed away in H. M. Ship *Bellerophon*, and doomed to spend the six remaining years of his life at St. Helena. Men would recognize this as a prophecy, and none the less so because it was unintelligible until it was fulfilled. They would remark that one or two of the matters might be explained as coincidences if they had not been accompanied by the other statements: but that the fortuitous concurrence of all the particulars mentioned, was simply incredible. There might be great difficulties in the way of receiving it as a prophecy, if the book made no claim to be inspired, and if no adequate reason for such an interposition of the divine foreknowledge could be discovered; but in the estimation of the great majority of men who would give attention to it, the prophetic evidence would be overwhelming. If we resort to the doctrine of probabilities, we find that countless millions to one would represent the improbability of such particulars combining in the prophecy and in the event.

Now this imaginary prophecy can give but a faint idea of the fulness of evidence embodied in many individual prophecies of Scripture. Before proceeding to illustrate this point, let us for a few minutes consider the copiousness, the multitude of these predictions of the Old Testament, written in the Hebrew tongue before that



language began to be disused by the Jews, translated into the Greek language two centuries and more before the birth of Christ, and in this version made accessible to the whole civilized world. As the Jews generally rejected Jesus, it will be understood that their testimony is that of enemies, and if their Scriptures could have been altered (in the nature of the case, an admitted impossibility) they would have been altered in another direction altogether.

What is affirmed then is that the Old Testament books, written, the very latest of them, nearly four centuries before Christ came into the world, contain predictions as follows :—

1. That a Messiah should come.
2. When he should come.
3. That he should be God and man together.
4. From whom descended.
5. Born of a virgin.
6. Where.
7. One like Elijah to prepare his way.
8. He should be a prophet.
9. Should preach in Galilee.
10. Should work miracles, the nature of these being specified.
11. How he should enter Jerusalem.
12. Should be poor and despised.
13. Should be betrayed.
14. By one of his disciples.
15. For 30 pieces of silver.
16. With which a potter's field should be purchased.
17. Should suffer pain and death for the transgressions of the people.
18. Should be cruelly mocked and derided.
19. That vinegar and gall should be offered him.
20. That his garments should be distributed.
21. Lots cast for his vesture.
22. Not a bone broken.
23. Yet pierced.
24. His hands and feet pierced.
25. Surrounded by the ungodly in his death.
26. Scourged.

27. Struck in the face.
28. Spat upon.
29. Without posterity.
30. Die with malefactors.
31. Be buried with the rich.
32. Misunderstood by his own.
33. Lamb-like in silence and patience.
34. Not imprisoned.
35. Not fairly tried.
36. An offering for sin.
37. Should rise from the dead.
38. Should ascend up on high.
39. Should pour out his Spirit.
40. His people a willing people.
41. All people blessed in him.
42. His kingdom an everlasting kingdom.

It was prophesied that he should be a Prophet and Legislator like to Moses ; reign over Jews and Gentiles ; a Teacher ; a Priest for ever ; a Saviour ; a Mediator ; an Intercessor ; a Shepherd ; a King, higher than all others ; a friend of the poor and needy and oppressed ; all nations should desire him ; all nations should know him, though at first they should despise and reject him.

A good many of these predictions will be found clustered together in Psalm xxii. and Isaiah liii. ; the remainder are scattered through many of the other books.

### III.

In the year before Christ 520, about sixteen years after the proclamation of Cyrus putting an end to the seventy years' captivity of the Jews in Babylon, Ezra tells us that the rebuilding of the temple, interrupted for some time through the opposition of the Samaritans, was resumed. Two prophets are mentioned as having encouraged the Jews to prosecute this important work, viz. Haggai and Zechariah. The writings of these prophets constitute a part of the canonieal scriptures of the Jews, written in the Hebrew language. These prophets are historical personages, mentioned, as we have said, in the book of Ezra, as having assisted in the building of that temple



which was to continue till the appearance of the Messiah. The dates are as clearly ascertainable as those of modern history. Just five and a half centuries intervened between the date of the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah and the commencement of Christ's ministry. In the 11th chapter of Zechariah are two verses, 12th and 13th, which we now extract and to which we invite the attention of our readers. We detach them from the context and treat them as we would an inscription on the fragment of an ancient tablet, the date of which is ascertained, but the scope and purport of which remain to be considered. The question is, What can we learn from this ancient fragment? We leave out of view all subsidiary evidence and just interrogate the fragment itself.

“And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price, and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I am prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.”

The first question that here occurs is, Who is speaking? Is there anything to show us? Well, we have a very clear intimation in the word Lord which follows. That the Lord is the speaker in both verses is evident from the transaction with which the speaker is connected in both verses. He is rated at a certain sum and sold for that sum. Well, we look into the Hebrew and find that the word rendered Lord, is Jehovah. The Supreme Being, the mighty God, Jehovah, is here represented as the subject of some transaction that takes place upon this earth; and what is this transaction? It is a most surprising and bewildering one. God is the subject of a sale; he is rated at a certain sum and sold for that sum. But how can these things be? Let us suppose that we know nothing of the New Testament, nothing of Christ; we are living either at an age when, or in a country where, nothing is known of the Gospel facts. We ask, How can it be that the Lord of all should ever be at the disposal of men in such a sense, as that they shall be able to make him the subject of sale, and for a certain

sum to transfer him to the possession of other parties. We look further, and we find that it is a purely voluntary transaction: If ye think good. We notice in the fourth place, the price agreed upon and actually paid: it is thirty pieces of silver, *i.e.* 30 shekels. We remember that Joseph was sold by his brethren to the Isbmaelites for 20 pieces of silver, Joseph, to whom his brethren and parents afterwards yielded obeisance as the arbiter of life and death. We have then one, even Jehovah, the Lord of all, upon this earth in some lowly form, despised and rejected of men, and rated at 30 shekels, and the price actually paid. But the money does not remain in the hands of him that receives it; it is cast away. And we have two indications of what becomes of it; it is cast to the potter; it is cast in the house of the Lord. Now here is a cluster of events that we can no more combine into any intelligible series, than we can the fancies of some wild dream. Jehovah; bargained for; a price agreed upon; that price, 30 shekels, paid; the money then cast away, in the house of the Lord: to the potter; seven particulars which for five and a half centuries it was utterly impossible for any one to put together so as to make of them an intelligible and consistent statement. And let us notice that the order of the last words is in the Hebrew the reverse of what it is in the English; not 'cast to the potter in the house of the Lord,' but 'cast in the house of the Lord to the potter.'

We turn now to the Gospel record of a transaction that took place in Jerusalem five and a half centuries afterwards. There was then present in that city one who could say, He that hath seen me hath seen the Father, who claimed to be God manifest in the flesh, and in whom we are told was all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, one who did works which none other man did, works revealing omnipotence, raising the dead, subduing winds and waves, casting out devils. But he was in the form of man, without earthly splendour, despised and rejected of men, persecuted by those who claimed to be the religious guides of the community. We read in John xi. 57 that the chief priests and Pharisees gave a commandment that if any man knew where Jesus was be

should show it, that they might take him. This was in consequence of the interest popularly awakened in him by the raising of Lazarus. Jesus was then in the country. After a while he comes up to Jerusalem, to the feast of the Passover, announcing to his disciples that he is about to die, though they fail to understand him because of their inability to perceive the necessity of his decease. Jesus was now daily in the temple teaching, and conversing with all classes of the people. The priests and Pharisees did not however venture to lay hands upon him, because they feared the people. The great cause of the hostility of the ecclesiastical rulers was that Jesus had not put himself in communication with them at the outset, and submitted his claims to them and proceeded in harmony with them, so as to secure to them the consideration they enjoyed. They imagined that religion stood or fell with them; and the bold uncompromising way in which Jesus publicly denounced their hypocrisy, they chose to regard as a wild assault upon the very foundations of religion. They wished to get Jesus in their power, but were at a loss how to accomplish it, when, to their astonishment, one of the chief disciples of Christ came to them and offered to betray his Master into their hands. This man had yielded to temptation and embezzled money given him for the poor; had been openly though gently reprov'd by Jesus for an opinion which he had expressed; he was perhaps annoyed and disappointed that Jesus would not put forth his power in such a way as to take to himself the authority in the state and establish his kingdom visibly; under the influence of these and other motives he went to the chief priests "and said unto them, What will ye give me and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver." Two or three nights afterwards the opportunity presented itself, and Judas led a band of armed men to the sequestered garden where Jesus was praying with his disciples. Afterwards when Judas found that Christ was going to allow the Jews to put him to death, he "repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have

betrayed the innocent blood." However, they would not draw back from the bargain, and refused to receive the money again. "And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed and went and hanged himself." Now here we have got almost all the particulars mentioned in Zechariah's prophecy. But one is wanting. We have no potter. The money is cast down in the house of the Lord, but how is it to find its way to the potter? We are told that the chief priests took the shekels, and, as it was not lawful to put that which was the price of blood into the treasury, they purchased with them a potter's field to bury strangers in.

All seven particulars of the prophecy thus meet, and the hidden meaning of the strange words comes out into broadest light. And the result is a standing miracle as undeniable as any that were wrought by Jesus when upon the earth. There is no possible way of accounting for the prophecy and its fulfilment except by the omniscience of God, who was pleased to give such cumulative testimony to the atoning work of Christ. Matthew, after mentioning the facts, refers to the prophecy, quoting it. As our text now has it, the prophecy is ascribed to Jeremiah. This is a mistake; Matthew probably wrote, "spoken by the prophet," and some copyist thought to improve it by introducing the name, and was betrayed by his memory into a mistake. This however has nothing to do with the prophecy itself and its fulfilment. We have noticed that the sacred writings have been preserved from errors, except (1) such as are unimportant, and (2) such as Scripture itself furnishes the means of correcting.

We remark in conclusion that if the prophecy is studied in connexion with its context it becomes still more declarative of the facts.

Here now is evidence that, to a candid mind, ought to make a multitude of difficulties advanced by unbelievers against the Bible, altogether insignificant, and it is only one prophecy that we have been considering.

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## IV.

Let us now turn our attention to some verses in the 22nd Psalm. For the present we will simply look at verses 16-18 ;

“For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet, I may tell all my bones; they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture.”

We will first look at this by itself, and see what meaning we can gather from it, without such elucidation as the context may afford. We treat it as an ancient fragment. We know that it is nearly 3,000 years old, having been written by David.

The speaker is compassed about by dogs; but he explains that he means the wicked. The parallelisms of Hebrew poetry are well known; the one clause throws light on the other. The speaker then is compassed about by a herd of wicked men, whose animosity is greatly aroused against him. They pierce his hands and his feet. Our lexicographers profess to find some difficulty with the word rendered ‘they pierce;’ it is not a common form; it might be rendered ‘as a lion;’ but then this would make no sense; ‘as a lion my hands and my feet’ would be rather unmeaning, and no ancient interpreter has so treated the word; they all treat it as from the verb *kur*, to pierce; the Septuagint translates it as our version does. Centuries ‘then before Christ came into the world it was translated ‘they pierce my hands and my feet.’ The wicked men who encompass him about, proceed to pierce his hands and his feet. As the Jews knew nothing of the punishment of crucifixion, until the Romans, shortly before Christ came, got possession of the country, they would be at a loss to understand the meaning of these words; evil men with murder in their hearts, would not stop to pierce the hands and feet of their victim. This would present a difficulty to them; still this was the obvious meaning of the words and thus they rendered the passage.



Then we have: "I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me." We have here presented to us the sufferer stripped; thrown into such a position that all his bones are made conspicuous, and fully exposed to the gaze of his enemies. The two different verbs, look and stare, together convey the idea which would be expressed in the phrase, They feast their eyes upon me.

Next we have the words: "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." To part means to divide; the oppressors of this sufferer, having stripped him of his apparel, pierced his hands and his feet, and placed him in a position in which they could feast their eyes upon him, the bones of his ribs being brought into full relief, now proceed to dispose of his garments. We have first the statement that they divide his garments among them; they share them with each other; one takes one piece of apparel and another takes another. But then comes the statement that they cast lots for his vesture. There seems to be an inconsistency; if they disposed of his garments by dividing them among themselves, what occasion could there be for the casting of lots? This brings in another principle altogether. How to reconcile the two is no easy task, until, ten centuries after, we reach the New Testament and read about the crucifixion of Jesus the Christ. We read in Matthew (xxvii. 35): "And they crucified him and parted his garments, casting lots." This does not explain why, after parting his garments, they should cast lots, so we turn to the other gospels, and we find in John (xix. 23, 24) as follows: "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat; now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it whose it shall be." This solves the mystery and shows the wonderful exactness of the prophecy. Garments in the East are generally of a flowing character, consisting of long pieces of cloth that can very well be divided. But Christ had a tunic or robe that had been woven throughout without seam, wrought expressly for him by his mother or by the



loving hands of some disciple ; the value of this consisted in its undividedness ; this they would not divide, but cast lots as to who should have it. These Roman soldiers were doubtless among those who had mocked Jesus on the score of his claim to be a prophet ; they knew nothing of the Hebrew Scriptures, and nothing was further from their minds than that they were fulfilling words which had been written a thousand years before. How very clearly, with a few bold graphic touches, is the whole scene depicted in the ancient fragment which we have detached from its place and made the subject of our present scrutiny ! We have the hostile multitude ; the solitary Sufferer ; the piercing of the hands and feet ; the exposure of the naked body ; its suspension by the hands, distending the skin and making prominent the bones ; in a word the crucifixion of the hated one ; and at the foot of the cross, we have the Roman soldiers sitting to dispose of the garments, and casting lots for the robe while they go shares in the rest. And the most striking part of all is that no man could tell just what was meant by the representation, until the scene actually occurred, for even the disciples of Christ, notwithstanding all that had been told them, were taken by surprise when Jesus was led away by his enemies.

But we will look closer into this 22nd Psalm, and we shall find fuller evidence that he of whom it treats was none other than Jesus of Nazareth.

## V.

When Jesus was on the cross, about the ninth hour (3 P.M.), a little before his death, he cried with a loud voice, saying, *Eli, Eli, lama sabàchthani?* that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? This was a quotation from the 22nd Psalm, the very first words of it, only the quotation is from the Chaldaic instead of the Hebrew. We can hardly doubt that one reason for which the dying Saviour so loudly uttered these words was for the purpose of drawing the attention of those who witnessed the crucifixion scene, of his disciples especially, to that Psalm as containing a prophetical description of

his sufferings and of the glorious issue of them. Not that we would for a moment deny that they expressed an actual experience of his soul at the time. But as the words which follow in the Psalm, equally expressive of what was going on in his mind, were not uttered by him, so these words would not have broken from his lips, had there not been this providential subordinate purpose just mentioned. These words, breaking from the lips of the Crucified One, instead of enhancing the mystery of the scene, give us a clue to the right interpretation of it. We naturally turn to the Psalm itself, and search it carefully for the light which it may have to give.

Observe the expression, *My God*. As his soul is made an offering for sin, it is necessary that the realization of God's love should be cut off. God is dealing with him as the sin-bearer of the world, and hides from him the light of his countenance. It is thus especially that Christ is made a curse for us; for to a holy being the agony of agonies is in the privation of God's favour. Nevertheless, he cannot give up his faith; God is his God; and it is to God himself, in filial trust, that the appeal is made.

Let us now notice some of the notable things in this prophecy. The Sufferer calls to mind that believers of former days had always been succoured when, in their extremity, they called upon the Lord. We may suppose that one after another these instances pass before the mind of the Crucified One; even Samson received attestation in his dying hour, though it was in the slaughter of his enemies; Enoch was translated that he should not see death; Job too obtained divine vindication: when in fact did God ever forsake his trusting people, suffering through their fidelity to him? This train of thought occurred not only to Jesus, but to those who were engaged in crucifying him; they took it as a demonstration of God's disregard, that he was allowed to undergo these sufferings and humiliations. "I am a worm and no man;" he was treated as a worm and not as a man; the vilest of men, Barabbas, a murderer and insurgent, being endowed with the liberty and life that were taken from Jesus. "All that see me laugh me to scorn;

they shoot out the lip, they shake the head saying, He trusted on the Lord." This was the very scene on which Jesus looked down. The sublime self-sacrifice that led Jesus to avail himself in no degree whatever of that divine power which he had always been willing to exercise in behalf of any other sufferer, was regarded by them as a divine reprobation of Jesus, a heavenly attestation of the correctness of their own opposition. But God had been his from tenderest infancy; while yet upon his mother's breast, he had learned to look to God in hope and trust. Oh, the deep tragedy of parting with such a life upon the cross, discarded of God, hated of men. doubtfully regarded by his disciples! It seems like the apotheosis of sin, the glorification of hypocrisy: as though God were saying to the Pharisaic world, Thou art my well-beloved band, and he that heareth you heareth me.

The Sufferer now speaks of those who compass him about, like bulls of Bashan, or like roaring lions mad for his destruction. "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint." In crucifying a man they usually nailed him to the cross upon the ground, then lifted the cross and let it descend into the socket prepared for it; this gave the whole frame a powerful wrench. "My tongue cleaveth to my jaws;" expressions like this show an internal fever, that caused our Lord to cry out, 'I thirst.'

In the midst of the 21st verse, we reach the moment of deliverance. The Sufferer has been brought into the dust of death. He is now figuratively described as having been delivered from the horns of the unicorns. Immediately, we find a joyful outbreak of praise, "I will declare thy name to my brethren." And when Jesus rose from the dead he hastens to send a message of kindness to his 'brethren.' "In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee; my praise shall be of thee in the great congregation." In a few graphic words the happy Pentecostal days are indicated, when so many thousands were daily praising God with gladness of heart. Special mention is made of the meek and of those that seek the Lord. We have now the solution

of the difficulties that present themselves in the beginning of the Psalm, when it seemed as though God did *not* hear when His Son called on Him, and *did* abhor the affliction of the afflicted, and *did* hide His face from him. And now comes a magnificent prophecy of the conversion of all nations, corresponding to Christ's word, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." It is in v. 27: "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." Instead of the people professedly of God, another shall be given him, that shall truly serve him. "They shall come and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born," that he hath done this. The business of Christ's messengers is to declare his righteousness, to say what he has done. Thus the prophecy goes out in universal triumph, and the in-gathering of all nations is closely connected with the extraordinary sufferings and humiliations endured by the atoning Messiah. What we find in these verses is not the favourite Jewish idea of the subjugation of the Gentiles, but their conversion; they are to turn unto the Lord with true worship. There is a correspondence between verses 26 and 29; and a parallelism may perhaps be traced between verses 26-28, and verses 29-31.

Suppose this Psalm were found at the end of the Acts, and represented as having been composed by a disciple of Christ, after the day of Pentecost, would any one hesitate to acknowledge it as a very felicitous delineation of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow? We suppose the very erities that now assail it, would be foremost to recognize its beauty and its faithfulness. But the modern prejudice against the supernatural is up in arms, when it is found that the Psalm was written 1,000 years before Christ came. Wisdom is justified of her children, and whosoever is willing shall know the truth of God.

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## VI.

Probably no one, not even the greatest sceptic, will deny that the Gospels give us a very faithful account of the state of mind prevalent among the people of Judæa at the time when Jesus of Nazareth preached, laboured and suffered. Nor will any one be willing to question the statement that the idea of a suffering Saviour did not enter into their conception of the Messiah for whom they were looking. And some may argue from this that such an idea could not have had any place in prophecy, otherwise they would have admitted it. Well, this is a matter of which we are competent to judge for ourselves. They put into our hands the Scriptures which were already ancient when Jesus appeared in the world; and we can easily see what these Scriptures do say about the coming One. But if their own prophecies spoke of humiliation, suffering and death in connection with the promised Messiah, why did they not recognize the fact? We are not bound to answer this, but it is easy to do so. The Jews partook of that nature which is common to us all, and which leads us to turn away from that which is distasteful. It is not alleged that the prophecies are so plain that men must see them and understand them, whether they will or not. It is a matter of daily experience that men, in reading the Scriptures, as in other matters, are governed very much by their prepossessions and inclinations. The Jews were, in the days of Christ, in a depressed state, subject to the Romans, and longing for deliverance from this yoke. It was to them a most galling thing that they, the chosen people of God, should be obliged to render obedience to a heathen power; and the religious portion of the community felt this quite as deeply as others did. Very naturally then they allowed their attention to be engrossed by those features of prophecy which spoke of exaltation and triumph rather than of humiliation; and their aspirations for political deliverance were blended with the expectation of a Messiah who should judge between them and their enemies, cover the latter with confusion and give them supremacy among the nations. But, as we have said, we are not



obliged to read the prophecies through the falsifying medium of their prejudices, but can read them for ourselves. We know that even the disciples of our Lord were quite unprepared for his arrest, trial, and crucifixion, though he had foretold these very events, in language most unequivocal; they did not know how to reconcile such things with the power and predicted glory of Christ, and accordingly they left the words unheeded, as having some impenetrable meaning. After the resurrection and ascension of Christ, and the outpouring of the promised Spirit, we find frequent references to that portion of Isaiah which is now designated the 53rd chapter. Philip found a man of Ethiopia, travelling in his chariot from Jerusalem, reading the book of Isaiah and much at a loss to know what that portion could signify. We propose to take up that passage (lii. 13 to liii. 12) and inquire what, in the Ethiopian's place and without acquaintance with the facts of Christ's life and death, we could have learned from it.

“Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: so shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider.” (Is. lii. 13-15.)

The Ethiopian eunuch, vizier of Queen Candace, was doubtless a proselyte to the Jewish faith, and was evidently a lover of God's word. We may think of him pondering this passage and endeavouring to grasp its purport, thus:

God is speaking here, saying, Behold, my servant. A few verses back, My people shall know my name; they shall, He says, know in that day that I am he that doth speak; behold, it is I. Behold, it is I; and then, Behold, my servant. Concerning this servant, strange things are announced. His form and visage are to be so marred as to distinguish him from others; this conveys the idea of dishonour and injury; yet is he to be exalted above all, exalted, extolled and made very high; some



remarkable exaltation is here intended. He is to sprinkle many nations. In the books of Moses we find that water and blood were sprinkled on objects or persons to cleanse them. It would seem then that this exalted person should take away the uncleanness of the Gentiles. Kings shall be confounded before him, witnessing things never before seen or heard of. There is then degradation and exaltation, and the one corresponding to the other.—But let us read on :

“ Who hath believed our report ? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed ? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground ; he hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.”

They who carry tidings of this exalted one, are met with general unbelief, and men do not recognize the arm of the Lord revealed in him. The arm of the Lord ; as though God’s power were embodied in him. And the reason why men believe not is because there is nothing attractive about his exterior : he hath no form nor comeliness, is marred more than any. He shall grow up, and not spring at once into fulness of being ; as a root out of dry ground, under circumstances not favourable, or at least different from those which men would have chosen. Not as Moses in the first forty years of his life, compassed about by advantages of royal position, education, influence ; but rather like Moses, in the succeeding forty years, in the obscurity, humility and privation of the Arabian desert and the companionship of shepherds. Yet, like Moses, he shall grow up ‘before the Lord,’ under his eye, taught and led by him. ‘When we shall see him,’ when he shall be made manifest to the people, they will be disappointed, not seeing in him the tokens they were looking for.

“ He is despised and rejected of men.”

The word rejected implies that he offered himself to men in some capacity. They would have none of him. For some reason or other they despised him. Perhaps the marring of his form and visage was done by those who rejected him. Why did they despise him ? Doubt-

less because he 'had grown up as a root out of dry ground,' under circumstances not considered favourable, in some position of obscurity. We have then, so far, some person of great importance in the sight of God, destined to an exaltation above that of kings, and who is to take away the religious disabilities of the Gentiles, 'sprinkling many nations,' growing up in early life under circumstances generally regarded as unfavourable, offering himself then in some capacity to the Jews and rejected by them with contempt, because his appearance and environments are not what they would think suitable.

The Ethiopian, pondering these things in his chariot, would be at a loss what to make of them, and would eagerly read on to see what more is said regarding this remarkable person.

## VII.

The Ethiopian, sitting in his chariot, reading the book of the prophecies of Isaiah, comes to these words :

"A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief : and we hid as it were our faces from him ; he was despised and we esteemed him not."

There are many sons and daughters of affliction : we are born to sorrow as the sparks fly upward. There was something about the person here spoken of that made his sorrows noticeable ; either he was one of whom this would not have been expected, or he was remarkable for the measure of his sorrow. Men withheld from him their regard and confidence ; they, especially, no doubt, whose favour is much valued, the influential, the leaders of society. He is looked down upon ; depreciated, disesteemed. What more ?

"Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows : yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted."

Some additional information is here given concerning this extraordinary person. The griefs and sorrows laid upon him were ours ; he suffered in behalf of the very people that despised and rejected him. They fancied that God was smiting him ; they saw the anger of heaven in his sufferings ; as the friends of Job insisted

upon it that his sufferings indicated guilt ; but he was throughout bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows. How could one bear the griefs and sorrows of another ? He seems to have suffered in their stead. But read we on :

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and with his stripes we are healed.”

The Ethiopian learns some additional particulars concerning this unknown and extraordinary person. He was wounded (the Hebrew word means to wound by piercing) and bruised for the transgressions of those who despised him ; chastisement to him in their stead and peace to them ; healing to them through stripes laid upon him. We see then that he is one who is treated as a felon and regarded as a God-forsaken man ; he is chastised with stripes and is bruised and pierced ; and all the time he is the innocent one, purchasing healing and peace for others by his sufferings.

“All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way ; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”

We now see that it is a divine arrangement. He is the divinely appointed substitute for sinners ; he must then have been different from sinners ; must have kept the way forsaken by them all. We see then the meaning of what was before said, He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows ; the Lord having laid upon him our iniquities.

“He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth ; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”

The vietim, as regards men, of cruel oppression, he nevertheless indulges in no remonstrances, but yields himself with lamb-like acquiescence to the doom.

“He was taken from prison and from judgment ; and who shall declare his generation ? for he was cut off out of the land of the living ; for the transgression of my people was he stricken.”

The Hebrew word for prison means restraint. He was taken away from the place of restraint and of judgment and led forth to execution. He is actually cut off; dies by the hand of public executioners; a lamb led to the slaughter. He is put to death for the transgression of the people. He is gone, and has left no seed behind him; who shall declare his generation?

"And he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."

He was to have been with the wicked in his burial, but he was with the rich in his death. This language is inexplicable to the Ethiopian, who greatly wishes he had some competent person to interpret the passage to him. In Jerusalem he had been lately hearing about one Jesus of Nazareth who had been put to death for calling himself the Son of God; but it was said that many thousands regarded him as the Messiah; chiefly however people of the lower classes, not acquainted with the Scriptures. This had stimulated his desire to know what the prophets had really said about the Messiah. But how could the Messiah die? When he came it would be to give preëminence to God's people. But let us read on. Notice the distinct statement that the sufferer whose story is here outlined, had done no violence and spoken nothing but the truth. It is evident that the people who put him to death as a felon, were terribly blinded.

"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands."

Here we see that the Victim was a divinely-appointed offering for sin; a Just One dying for the unjust; purchasing for men peace and healing through his voluntary sufferings. But what have we now? He shall prolong his days. After having been cut off, shall he live and carry on the work of God? He died without posterity, but now we hear of his seed. What seed is this?

"He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant

justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

His dying for others; as a transgressor; voluntarily pouring out his life as a libation; these facts are reiterated. In his dying hours he addresses God not in his own behalf, but in behalf of others. Intermingled with these notices of a lamb-like sufferer, put to death for the sins of others, we have notices of his exaltation and widely-extended rule. We were told before that he would be exalted, extolled, made very high, should stop the mouths of kings and sprinkle many nations; here again, that he shall divide the spoil with the strong, and justify many. Who are these justified ones? Who will unfold to me the meaning of this strange passage? In all Jewish history is there anybody to whom this can apply? What innocent man was put to death for the sins of others, amidst universal obloquy, and afterwards lived and ruled and gave peace and healing and justification to men, and exercised a power greater than that of kings?

Philip appears by the side of the Ethiopian's chariot, and offers to give him the solution of this prophetic enigma.

### VIII.

Philip, seated beside the treasurer of Queen Candace with the book of the prophet Isaiah before him, calls his attention first to the things actually set forth in the prophecy which he had been reading. The reference throughout is clearly to some person God designates as his servant; one that is truly his servant, dealing prudently or wisely; a person of great importance in the sight of God, destined to an exaltation above that of kings; one that is to take away the religious disabilities of the Gentiles (sprinkling many nations): he must however grow up in early life under circumstances generally regarded as unfavourable; offering himself then in some capacity to the Jews, he is rejected by them with contempt because his ap-



pearance and environments are not what they would think suitable; a man of sorrows and humiliations; he is regarded as smitten of God, and men see in his sufferings an evidence of the divine displeasure, while really he is suffering on behalf of the very people who are rejecting him; he is wounded, bruised, chastised, scourged, in order to procure healing and peace for the people who have gone astray like lost sheep, and it is the Lord himself, Jehovah, who lays upon him the iniquities of all; the just one suffers for the unjust; with sublime patience and meekness, in silence, he endures it all; he is finally cut off, executed, and buried, and though he dies the death of a felon, he is with the rich in his death; yet his days are prolonged and he enters upon a path of triumph, dividing the spoil with the strong, and there is this peculiarity about his rule, that he imparts the blessings of justification to men. In a few words, the subject of this prophecy is a faithful servant of God, innocent and pure, disregarded in early years, because of his obscurity, conspicuous for sufferings, rejected, despised, treated as a criminal, scourged, put to death, and denounced on account of these very sufferings as one whom divine vengeance suffered not to live, yet afterwards living on, justifying many, attaining to an extraordinary exaltation, confounding kings, sprinkling many nations. Where in all the annals of mankind can we find a person in whom these extraordinary contrasts can be found combined? Rejected of men, accepted of God; humble in origin, of highest exaltation; treated as an enemy of God and man, scourged and publicly executed, yet suffering all patiently on behalf of others, interceding with God in behalf of transgressors, living on, blessing men with justification, clothing himself with power that exercises a controlling influence even on the kings of earth, and removing the uncleanliness of the Gentiles. The person described is remarkable for innocence, for lowliness, for the divine favour, for suffering, for ignominy, for bearing the sins of others by divine appointment, for his lamb-like deportment, for his death as a criminal, for the prevalency of his intercessions, for his return to life, his widely extended power, for the blessings of his reign.



Philip now tells the eunuch of Jesus of Nazareth. The Ethiopian proselyte was returning from Jerusalem, where he must have heard of one Jesus, a Galilean who had been put to death a year or two before, for having called himself Son of God and King of the Jews, and whom thousands had been led to regard as the Messiah, believing that he had risen from the dead. He would also have been told that the heresy threatened at one time to become a very dangerous one, but that the vigour of the authorities had at length succeeded in stamping it out, at least in scattering the thousands who had embraced it in Jerusalem. This Jesus had possessed some extraordinary powers in his lifetime ; but his power all left him at last, and he was completely at the mercy of those who executed upon him the penalty of the law. Strange to say, his disciples had become bolder after his death than they were before, and what is remarkable is that they performed the same kind of wonderful works that he had wrought. He must have taught them his secret ; but that he himself should have been without power when the authorities seized him, is not easily explained. At all events, Jesus was not the Messiah.

Philip now relates to the eunuch the facts which had been kept back from the latter by his Jerusalem acquaintances, and shows how perfectly all the particulars mentioned by Isaiah had been fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. The Jews fancied that the apparent powerlessness of this Jesus when in the hands of the authorities, and his ignominious death upon the cross, neutralized completely all that might be adduced in his favour on the ground of his marvellous works ; but Philip shows that this apparent powerlessness and lamb-like submission to death, had been explicitly predicted in the 53rd of Isaiah. He was to be led as a lamb to the slaughter : he was to be numbered with the transgressors ; stripes were to be laid upon him ; he was to be wounded and bruised ; he was to be cut off ; all without any resistance on his part ; for he was a divinely appointed Victim for the sins of man ; God's own chosen sacrificial Lamb ; and what the lambs offered by man for 4,000 years could not begin to do, he fully accomplished, removing the sin of

the world out of the way of God's mercy, and making effectual intercession for the transgressors. He describes the treatment received by Christ; and as the eunuch, with his mind's eye, follows Jesus from the Jewish Council to the Hall of Pilate, and sees the crowning with thorns, the scourging, the smiting, the blindfolding, the mocking, the rejection in favour of Barabbas, the crucifixion between thieves, he sees the predictions of Isaiah fulfilled to the letter. And Philip, we may be sure, failed not to tell the treasurer of Candace that the disciples of Jesus, though forewarned by him as to his death, yet, through ignorance of the true nature of the Messiah's works, were not prepared for it and lost heart utterly, insomuch that while Jesus was in the tomb they scarcely dared to show themselves beyond the threshold of their place of abode. When Jesus died, their hopes, their courage, their influence all died; whichever way they turned, a torrent of universal reproach was ready to be poured upon them; they sighed for the obscurity which had been theirs before they knew Jesus. When a report was brought them that Jesus had risen from the dead, they refused to believe it; corroboration came, yet they still could not believe: it was necessary that Jesus should appear in the midst of them, talk and eat with them, and show them the prints of the nails in his hands before they could believe. Then by the descent of the Holy Spirit, after the Ascension of Jesus, they had become endued with power, and had stood up to preach salvation from sin through the blood of Christ, to all men, fearless of what man might do.

Light streams in upon the mind of the eunuch; all is now as clear as day; he sees how much more exalted the divine conception of the Messiah, and how much more suited to man's need, than that which the Jews commonly entertained.

And many thousands, since the days of this Abyssinian eunuch, have in like manner been able to see the divine attestation to Jesus as the Christ, afforded by the remarkable prediction of Isaiah lii. 13—liii. 12. And we do not envy any man the state of mind on which this passage of God's word fails to flash the evidence of its supernatural character.

## IX.

In Deuteronomy, xviii. 15-19, we have these words of God addressed to the Israelites through Moses :

“ The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me ; unto him shall ye hearken ; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth ; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.”

Here we have a prophecy, given to the Jewish people before their entrance into the promised land, to the effect that a prophet like unto Moses should be raised up unto them, from the midst of themselves, through whom the Lord would speak to them. And there is a reference to the alarm which seized the Israelites at the great and terrible manifestations of Sinai, when they entreated that the Lord would not speak to them immediately, but mediately, through a Mediator, namely Moses ; to which the Lord had assented. Let us now inquire what could have been intended by the words, ‘ like unto thee.’

It is evident that the resemblance spoken of, was to be found in points wherein other prophets did not resemble Moses. The Jews had prophets even in the lifetime of Moses. The spirit of prophecy descended at one time on seventy elders. Throughout the whole Mosaic dispensation prophets were ever and anon raised up to recall the Jews from their wanderings, to threaten them with chastisements, to speak to them of the coming Messiah, to add to the inspired Scriptures. We have just used the words “ Mosaic dispensation.” These words sufficiently indicate wherein Moses differed from all the prophets that followed him, down to the time of John the Baptist. He was the founder of a dispensation. He was a legislator. He gave the nation its constitution,

its institutions, its festivals, its laws. None of the prophets that succeeded him could alter these institutions or revoke these laws. Moses was the mediator of a covenant between God and his Jewish people. He was again and again, and for long periods of time, alone with God upon the mountain-top; he saw the glory of God as no other man had seen it.

Now how could a prophet like unto Moses be raised up among the Jews? Here was a difficult question. So long as the dispensation lasted, it was forbidden to teach anything that was contrary to it; it was perpetually binding, from generation to generation. The sacred books were in the ark, under the sanction of the very presence of God, under the mercy-seat. But the Prophet of whom mention was made in the words we have quoted, was one whom the Jews were to hear in all things; his authority was to be paramount to that of Moses; he must then be one who should introduce a new covenant.

The prophets that came 800 or 1,000 years after Moses, spoke of the Messiah that was to come, in terms that accorded with this description; as one that should introduce a new order of things. Jeremiah distinctly announced a new covenant in place of the old covenant.

Let us notice what is said regarding the authority with which the Prophet of a new dispensation should be clothed. "Whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him," says the Lord. How the Jews understood this expression may be gathered from the way in which Peter puts it, in his address, Acts iii. 23: "shall be destroyed from among the people."

The Jews were so little disposed to accept of the theory that the Mosaic institutions could ever be superseded, that they to this time cling to them in theory, though practically they find it impossible to observe them except in a most shadowy way. And thus it has always been throughout their history. They were willing to violate the spirit of the ordinances, and even import into their system the worship of idols, still they would not for a moment entertain the idea that they

should accept of anything in supersession of the laws of Moses.

Fifteen centuries went by, after the mysterious exit of Moses from the earth, and many prophets came and went, leaving their inspired utterances to be embodied in the sacred Canon, and still no one appeared to whom this singular prediction could have any application. Elijah was a prophet of mighty deeds ; Isaiah a prophet of glorious utterances ; David was the sweet singer of Israel ; Ezra had returned with the Jews from the Babylonian captivity ; but no one had appeared claiming anything like parity with Moses. At length Jesus appeared declaring plainly that Moses had testified of him (John v. 45-47), and asserting, in the Sermon on the Mount, and constantly, in most unequivocal terms, his right to modify, suspend, and change the Mosaic laws.

But it might be said that the prophecy could easily be fulfilled by one who chose to preach against the Mosaic institutions and set forth others in their place. Not so ; look again at the terms of the prophecy : A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me. When Moses appeared to the children of Israel in Egypt, he gave them clear evidence that he was commissioned of God, God bore testimony to him in such a way that they could not doubt the divine legation. And so should it be with the predicted Prophet. Supernatural testimony continually waited upon him. He did not come preaching against Moses, but on the contrary he denounced the Jews for their neglect of the Mosaic commands. But he plainly showed that that dispensation itself anticipated and made provision for the work that he came to accomplish. Think not, he says, that I came to destroy the law or the prophets ; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. And to this day, the Old Testament and the New, the Old Covenant and the New, as they are more correctly called, are in the hands of all the disciples of Christ, and receive equal honour as the inspired word of God.

The Gospels tell us that when Jesus was on a certain mount with three of his disciples, he was transfigured, a bright cloud overshadowed him, and a voice from the



excellent glory said, This is my beloved Son; hear him. Moses and Elijah were there from heaven. The *hear him* was emphatic, and intimated that the time and person spoken of by Moses, had come: Him shall ye hear in all things.

There are other and very interesting points of resemblance between Moses and Jesus Christ, viewing them as prophets or teachers, and as rulers of the people of God. But we think it enough to insist upon the main idea of the prophecy that there was to be a prophet differing from all the successors of Moses, in that he was, like him, a legislator from heaven, the founder of a new dispensation, the author of the new Covenant. The prophecy was exactly fulfilled in Jesus, and in no other; and could not have been fulfilled in him if God had not been with him.

## X.

In the 7th chapter of Isaiah, 14th verse, we find these words:

“Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

Looking at the immediate context we learn that the direct object of the prophecy was to quiet the fears of Ahaz and the people of Judah regarding Israel and Syria, by announcing the overthrow of those kingdoms within a short time by the king of Assyria; which would be followed in due time by the overthrow of Judah and the Babylonian captivity. At the same time there is something in the language of the verse we have quoted that rises above such an application and seems to point to something beyond. There are those now-a-days who would change the word ‘*virgin*’ to ‘*young woman*,’ and who deny that anything more than natural was meant; but it happens that the Septuagint translation, made about two centuries before Christ, takes the word as signifying ‘*virgin*,’ which is indeed its ordinary sense. It is thus translated in Canticles i. and other places. But perhaps we should hesitate to seek any other application



than that which is indicated in the immediate context, though there would be two difficulties, first, the word 'virgin,' and second, the word 'Immanuel,' if it were not that the prophecy is taken up and expressed in clearer terms in the 9th chapter. Even in the 8th chapter there is the recurrence of the word 'Immanuel'; the land of Judah is spoken of as Immanuel's land. Immanuel means "God with us;" it might be used as a mere name, or it might be used as a designation of the character of the person whose birth is spoken of. The person, we now see, is a ruler; one to whom the land given to God's chosen people might be said to belong in some sense: "The stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel." But we pass on to the next chapter, vv. 6, 7:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

Here we have again the birth of a child, a son; and the prophecy evidently connects itself with the two to which we have referred, inasmuch as this child becomes a ruler, 'the government is upon his shoulder,' and this child is certainly Immanuel, God with us, he being designated in express terms, The Mighty God, the Father of Ages. Thus the three prophecies are seen to be linked together. They are like three distinct members of some contrivance or puzzle, that refuse to fit into other pieces and only fit into one another; each is introductory to the other, and we must bring them together in order to understand either. In all the range of literature, no more wonderful words than these were ever found; and no man living before the Christian dispensation could have even entertained the idea of a combination of such apparently incompatible attributes as are here ascribed to one person.

To us a son is given ; to us, mankind, or to us, the people of God. A son may be said to be given to a nation, when a son is born to the sovereign. As regards his earthly parentage we are simply told that a virgin shall conceive and bear a son. The government is to be upon his shoulder ; he is to be the King of the Jews, the King of God's people. This makes it the more noticeable that there is no mention of an earthly father. We are then told that his name shall be called Wonderful. Previously, we were told that his name should be called Immanuel. The list of names now given, shows plainly that designations of character are meant. This child born of a virgin is not merely to be the ruler of God's people : there is something about him distinguishing him from all kings, and his government from all governments ; nay, distinguishing him from all born of women. He is Wonderful, Counsellor. The word for Counsellor is One that maketh to know, Instructor. This wonderful one is a Teacher, reigning by means of the truth. When he appears we may expect something extraordinary in the way of instruction, so that the hearers will be greatly astonished. But is he indeed Immanuel, God with us ? will God in very deed dwell with the children of men ? shall there be a divine incarnation ? a Son of Man in whom is the fulness of the Godhead ? Yes, the prophet goes on to use language that no Jew would have uttered unless constrained by the spirit of prophecy. This wondrous Teacher is no other than the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father or the Father of Ages, the Prince of Peace. We may expect then that this wondrous Teacher, born of an unnamed virgin, shall not only speak marvellous words, but shall give evidence of divine power dwelling in him ; do works that none other man did ; the elements shall obey him ; power shall dwell in his word like that of Him who said, Let there be light. But with all this, he is the Prince of Peace. This reminds us of the 72nd Psalm : " In his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth ; he shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of earth." Also of the 45th Psalm : " And in

thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness." But we confine our attention to the passage under review. This wonderful Potentate shall not rule by force, but by truth; his reign is the reign of peace; his law is in the hearts of his subjects; they have amity with one another, and they have peace with the King, finding their pleasure in doing his will. The cordial assent and acquiescence of the subject is the distinction of his kingdom. He is the Father of Ages, *i.e.* of æons or dispensations; manifested at a particular period, he was nevertheless from the beginning, and all things as they were by him were for him.

Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. His pacific rule is to go on expanding; it is not at once grasped in its entirety, but it is gradually established, by the spread of the truth, cordially received. More than this, it is to go on perpetually expanding; every acquisition becomes a new centre of influence; each new subject becomes a new worker. And it is upon the throne of David that this sovereign is to sit. David reigned over the undivided people of God. But his rule was anything but pacific. It was a struggle for existence; there were many enemies and rivals. The fulness of divine blessing in connection with that rule was not enjoyed, because the people were not thoroughly willing. If all the people had been actuated by the Spirit of God, there would have been such a kingdom as God designed; but the fulness of the blessing was forfeited, because the great majority of them remained in their sins.

If any one insists that this prophecy should be fulfilled literally, and He who is the subject of it should actually sit upon a throne in Jerusalem reigning over the twelve tribes of Israel, we beg leave to point out that this idea is precluded by the very promises given to the Jews. The literal restoration of David's rule would require the literal restoration of that condition of things which then existed throughout the world, namely the light of revelation appropriated to the Jews and withheld from others; it would require the restoration of the temple as the place where God was to be worshipped, and the

restoration of the Mosaic ritual. Whereas the very promises given to the Jews showed that the Mosaic dispensation was only a rudimental condition of things ; all the ends of the earth were to see the salvation of God ; the glory of God was to fill the earth ; the name of God to be great among the Gentiles ; all mankind to know God. What is meant here by the throne of David is explained by the remainder of the prophecy showing the universality of the kingdom and the divinity of the ruler. " Upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish with judgment and with justice, from henceforth and for ever." What is this but the kingdom of God, which is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost ? Finally, we are told that the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this ; language indicative of the heartfelt earnestness with which God will bring the power of heaven to bear upon the increasing of Messiah's kingdom.

Every reader must now have seen that the group of prophecies which we have just considered, this trefoil gathered from Isaiah vii.—ix., could not relate to any events occurring in the times of the prophet ; and we ask those who are acquainted with universal history to point out one in whom the various things here predicated met together. A king ; the ruler of all that obey God ; a teacher ; ruling by the truth ; a prince of peace ; of singular birth ; having an unending and an ever-widening kingdom ; an incarnation of Deity ; his reign the reign of divine justice.

Napoleon, at St. Helena, rebuked some one who spoke disparagingly of Christ, by contrasting Christ's kingdom with his own, which a few short years had seen overthrown. Eighteen centuries had only witnessed the extension of Christ's kingdom, extended without force, without worldly allurements, in spite of the utmost opposition of men, and so mightily taking hold of the hearts of believers, that there were millions willing to lay down their lives for this wonderful Teacher-King.

## XI.

We have hitherto considered only Old Testament predictions of the Messiah and his work. We may consider now some of the sayings of Christ, and inquire how far the fulfilment of them affords evidence of the supernatural.

On the third day of the last week of the life of Jesus, three days before his crucifixion, he sat with four of his disciples on the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem. They called his attention to the goodly and massive stones of the temple, and he told them that not one stone was to be left upon another; Jerusalem was to be compassed with armies, and when the disciples saw this they were to understand that the desolation was nigh and flee to the mountains so as not to be involved in the fate coming on the Jews. The Jewish people would fall by the edge of the sword and be led away captive unto all nations; and Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the fulfilment of the times of the Gentiles. Luke xxi. 6, 20-24. And as regards the time when this should be, he said that the generation then living should not pass away till the predicted events should occur.

But some one may say that the prophecy was probably invented by the disciples and was never published till after the destruction of Jerusalem. Let such objectors carefully read the chapters containing these predictions, Matt. xxiv., Mark xiii., Luke xxi., and they will easily see that if they had been written after the event they would have been very different from what they are. For Jesus in immediate connection with the account of the destruction of Jerusalem and as though it were part and parcel of it, uses this language: "In those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds." And presently he adds: "This generation



shall not pass till all these things be done." Now it is evident that no one, writing after the destruction of Jerusalem, would have mixed up this description of the second coming of Christ with that of the overthrow of the Jewish nation, as though they were simultaneous. This, it may be urged, simply shifts the difficulty. If Christ was a true prophet, why did he confound the two events? Well, he seems to confound them, for the reason that the events were confounded in the question of the disciples: "Tell us when shall these things be (the overthrow of the temple), and what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world." They themselves would appear to have had the idea that the three events would be simultaneous. Our Lord in his reply does what they do in this question; he groups the events together. And this corresponds with what we find in the Old Testament prophecies. While the events were still future, it was not necessary that they should be disentangled one from another, this will be gradually accomplished by the fulfilling of individual particulars. Thus may a traveller over an extended plain, see before him in the distance a great pile of mountains, constituting apparently one mass. He journeys on, and after a while sees a single mountain detaching itself from the rest; he passes this and the remainder of the mass is seen far far away. In process of time another portion of the mass becomes distinguishable by itself, and when reached, another considerable interval is seen still to separate the traveller from the great bulk of the mountain range. One reason why there should be a certain indefiniteness in the outlines of prophecy, is that the agent in the fulfilment of the predictions is generally man himself; not blind, mechanical agencies, but a moral agent who stamps his own character and impresses his own will upon the events that occur. We can easily then see reasons why these different events should be grouped in a prophecy uttered before there was any sign or token of the destruction of Jerusalem; but the idea that they might be thus grouped after the destruction of the city carries its own refutation on the face of it.

Nothing at the time Jesus spoke was more unlikely, humanly speaking, than that the Romans after having

for a century held Judæa as a Roman province should destroy the capital, and deport the nation. This is a most extraordinary course to pursue, and we do not remember any other example in history of a nation numbering millions of people thus taken from its soil and carried into other countries. A special feature of this case is that the Jews looked upon Palestine as a peculiar gift of God to them, a chosen land for them a chosen people, a sacred region as compared with any other region under the sun. Even supposing the Jews were violently deported, they would avail themselves of the first opportunity to return and could not be long kept out. Yet Christ predicted the absolute and complete overthrow of the city and of the temple with circumstances of horror never equalled, predicted the deportation of the Jewish nation, and their dispersion among all nations, and still further predicted that the sacred land would continue to be trodden down of the Gentiles until the close of the dispensation, and the time for the manifestation of Christ in glory should come. For eighteen centuries the Jews have remained among all nations; they are found everywhere, even in the heart of China, and in the heart of Africa, and wherever they are they unconsciously bear testimony to Jesus as the Messiah, for the rejection of whom they are punished exactly as he had predicted, in conformity with the word of Moses, that whosoever would not hear him should be cut off from the congregation of God. Julian greatly wished to falsify this prophecy and undertook to rebuild the temple, but he was frustrated in his endeavour. What a triumph it would be to the gainsayer if he could point to the Jews now or at any time since the first century, in their own land! How unlikely it was, in the constant vicissitudes of human affairs, that the key of their own land should have been kept out of the hand of the Jews all these centuries! The power that carried them away, was soon itself destroyed; but this was of no avail; there was always some power to take possession of it, and for the last 12 centuries it has been in the hands of Mahomedans, the deadliest enemies of the Jews. They have now been excluded from it a considerably greater time than that during which they occupied it. They were removed to

Babylon because of their idolatry; but they returned from Babylon completely cured of this tendency; for what uncommon and peculiar sin was it that they were carried away, thirty years after the crucifixion of Christ, into all nations, to remain thus banished so many centuries? It was not idolatry; what then was the sin? It was the sin in which they have as a nation persisted throughout the Christian era; which was predicted by the prophet Isaiah; the sin of despising and rejecting Jesus the Christ. They acknowledge, for the evidence is irresistible, that about the time when Jesus was born the whole Jewish nation were looking for the Christ whose advent at that time they were led by Daniel's prophecies to expect. Yet the Christ whom they insist on, has not yet made his appearance. Another puzzling fact for them is this: On the supposition that Jesus was not the true Christ, why did not the prophecies, which contain so many particulars regarding the enemies of God's people, make some mention of this dreadful Christian schism, and of all the wonderful events that have grown out of it, and the prodigious power to be obtained by Christian nations? The Jews this day are best off where the words of Jesus are held in most honour, and in some parts of the world they are even indebted to Christians for the knowledge of their own Scriptures. And yet, there is not a word in their prophecies concerning this state of things, unless indeed they recognize Jesus as the Christ, and then they will find a great deal in their prophecies concerning the existing condition of things, and they will find also why Jerusalem has been trodden down of the Gentiles for eighteen centuries.

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## PROPHECIES RESPECTING CHRIST.

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- As the Son of God. *Psa.* 2 : 7. Fulfilled, *Luke* 1 : 32, 35.
- As the seed of the woman. *Gen.* 3 : 15. Fulfilled, *Gal.* 4 : 4.
- As the seed of Abraham. *Gen.* 17 : 7. *Gen.* 22 : 18. Fulfilled, *Gal.* 3 : 16.
- As the seed of Isaac. *Gen.* 21 : 12. Fulfilled, *Heb.* 11 : 17—19.
- As the seed of David. *Psa.* 132 : 11. *Jer.* 23 : 5. Fulfilled, *Acts* 13 : 23. *Rom.* 1 : 3.
- His coming at a set time. *Gen.* 49 : 10. *Dan.* 9 : 24, 25. Fulfilled, *Luke* 2 : 1.
- His being born of a virgin. *Isa.* 7 : 14. Fulfilled, *Mat.* 1 : 18. *Luke* 2 : 7.
- His being called Immanuel. *Isa.* 7 : 14. Fulfilled, *Mat.* 1 : 22, 23.
- His being born in Bethlehem of Judæa. *Mic.* 5 : 2. Fulfilled, *Mat.* 2 : 1. *Luke* 2 : 4—6.
- Great persons coming to adore him. *Psa.* 72 : 10. Fulfilled, *Mat.* 2 : 1—11.
- The slaying of the children at Bethlehem. *Jer.* 31 : 15. Fulfilled, *Mat.* 2 : 16—18.
- His being called out of Egypt. *Hos.* 11 : 1. Fulfilled, *Mat.* 2 : 15.
- His being preceded by John the Baptist. *Isa.* 40 : 3. *Mal.* 3 : 1. Fulfilled, *Mat.* 3 : 1, 3. *Luke* 1 : 17.
- His being anointed with the Spirit. *Psa.* 45 : 7. *Isa.* 11 : 2. *Isa.* 61 : 1. Fulfilled, *Mat.* 3 : 16. *Jno.* 3 : 34. *Acts* 10 : 38.
- His being a prophet like unto Moses. *Deu.* 18 : 15—18. Fulfilled, *Acts* 3 : 20—22.
- His being a Priest after the order of Melchizedek. *Psa.* 110 : 4. Fulfilled, *Heb.* 5 : 5, 6.
- His entering on his public ministry. *Isa.* 61 : 1, 2. Fulfilled, *Luke* 4 : 16—21, 43.
- His ministry commencing in Galilee. *Isa.* 9 : 1, 2. Fulfilled, *Mat.* 4 : 12—16, 23.

- His entering publicly into Jerusalem. Zec. 9 : 9. Fulfilled, Mat. 21 : 1—5.
- His coming into the temple. Hag. 2 : 7, 9. Mal. 3 : 1. Fulfilled, Mat. 21 : 12. Luke 2 : 27—32. Jno. 2 : 13—16.
- His poverty. Isa. 53 : 2. Fulfilled, Mar. 6 : 3. Luke 9 : 58.
- His meekness and want of ostentation. Isa. 42 : 2. Fulfilled, Mat. 12 : 15, 16, 19.
- His tenderness and compassion. Isa. 40 : 11. Isa. 42 : 3. Fulfilled, Mat. 12 : 15, 20. Heb. 4 : 15.
- His being without guile. Isa. 53 : 9. Fulfilled, 1 Pet. 2 : 22.
- His zeal. Psal. 69 : 9. Fulfilled, Jno. 2 : 17.
- His preaching by parables. Psal. 78 : 2. Fulfilled, Mat. 13 : 34, 35.
- His working miracles. Isa. 35 : 5, 6. Fulfilled, Mat. 11 : 4—6. Jno. 11 : 47.
- His bearing reproach. Psal. 22 : 6. Psal. 69 : 7, 9, 20. Fulfilled, Rom. 15 : 3.
- His being rejected by his brethren. Psal. 69 : 8. Isa. 53 : 3. Fulfilled, Jno. 1 : 11. Jno. 7 : 5.
- His being a stone of stumbling to the Jews. Isa. 8 : 14. Fulfilled, Rom. 9 : 32. 1 Pet. 2 : 8.
- His being hated by the Jews. Psal. 69 : 4. Isa. 49 : 7. Fulfilled, Jno. 15 : 24, 25.
- His being rejected by the Jewish rulers. Psal. 118 : 22. Fulfilled, Mat. 21 : 42. Jno. 7 : 48.
- That Jews and Gentiles should combine against him. Psal. 2 : 1, 2. Fulfilled, Luke 23 : 12. Acts 4 : 27.
- His being betrayed by a friend. Psal. 41 : 9. Psal. 55 : 12—14. Fulfilled, Jno. 13 : 18, 21.
- His disciples forsaking him. Zec. 13 : 7. Fulfilled, Mat. 26 : 31, 56.
- His being sold for thirty pieces of silver. Zec. 11 : 12. Fulfilled, Mat. 26 : 15.
- His price being given for the potter's field. Zec. 11 : 13. Fulfilled, Mat. 27 : 7.
- The intensity of his sufferings. Psal. 22 : 14, 15. Fulfilled, Luke 22 : 42, 44.
- His sufferings being for others. Isa. 53 : 4—6, 12. Dan. 9 : 26. Fulfilled, Mat. 20 : 28.



- His patience and silence under sufferings. Isa. 53 : 7.  
Fulfilled, Mat. 26 : 63. Mat. 27 : 12, 14.
- His being smitten on the cheek. Mic. 5 : 1. Fulfilled,  
Mat. 27 : 30.
- His visage being marred. Isa. 52 : 14. Isa. 53 : 3. Ful-  
filled, Jno. 19 : 5.
- His being spit on and scourged. Isa. 50 : 6. Ful-  
filled, Mar. 14 : 65. Jno. 19 : 1.
- His hands and feet being nailed to the cross. Psa. 22 :  
16. Fulfilled, Jno. 19 : 18. Jno. 20 : 25.
- His being forsaken by God. Psa. 22 : 1. Fulfilled,  
Mat. 27 : 46.
- His being mocked. Psa. 22 : 7, 8. Fulfilled, Mat. 27 :  
39—44.
- Gall and vinegar being given him to drink. Psa. 69 :  
21. Fulfilled, Mat. 27 : 34.
- His garments being parted and lots cast for his vesture.  
Psa. 22 : 18. Fulfilled, Mat. 27 : 35.
- His being numbered with the transgressors. Isa. 53 :  
12. Fulfilled, Mar. 15 : 28.
- His intercession for his murderers. Isa. 53 : 12. Ful-  
filled, Luke 23 : 34.
- His death. Isa. 53 : 12. Fulfilled, Mat. 27 : 50.
- That a bone of him should not be broken. Exo. 12 : 46.  
Psa. 34 : 20. Fulfilled, Jno. 19 : 33, 36.
- His being pierced. Zec. 12 : 10. Fulfilled, Jno. 19 :  
34, 37.
- His being buried with the rich. Isa. 53 : 9. Fulfilled,  
Mat. 27 : 57—60.
- His flesh not seeing corruption. Psa. 16 : 10. Fulfilled,  
Acts 2 : 31.
- His resurrection. Psa. 16 : 10. Isa. 26 : 19. Fulfilled,  
Luke 24 : 6, 31, 34.
- His ascension. Psa. 68 : 18. Fulfilled, Luke 24 : 51.  
Acts 1 : 9.
- His sitting on the right hand of God. Psa. 110 : 1. Ful-  
filled, Heb. 1 : 3.
- His exercising the priestly office in heaven. Zec. 6 : 13.  
Fulfilled, Rom. 8 : 34.
- His being the chief corner-stone of the Church. Isa. 28 :  
16. Fulfilled, 1 Pet. 2 : 6, 7.

His being King in Zion. Psa. 2 : 6. Fulfilled, Luke 1 : 32. Jno. 18 : 33—37.

The conversion of the Gentiles to him. Isa. 11 : 10. Isa. 42 : 1. Fulfilled, Mat. 12 : 17, 21. Jno. 10 : 16. Acts 10 : 45, 47.

His righteous government. Psa. 45 : 6, 7. Fulfilled Jno. 5 : 30. Rev. 19 : 11.

His universal dominion. Psa. 72 : 8. Dan. 7 : 14. Fulfilled, Phi. 2 : 9, 11.

The perpetuity of his kingdom. Isa. 9 : 7. Dan. 7 : 14. Fulfilled, Luke 1 : 32, 33.



